

CHAPTER ONE: Morrison's *Song of Solomon*1.1 Toni Morrison and *Song of Solomon*

Toni Morrison, the first Afro-American female Nobel Prize winner for literature, was born in Lorain Ohio in 1931. She graduated from Howard University with a bachelor degree in 1953 and then went on to graduate at Cornell University. She has published seven novels so far. *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992) and *The Love* (2003). She occupies prominent place in contemporary literary scenario being both a woman and Afro-American, best known for her intricately woven novels which focused on intimate relationship especially between male and female set against the backdrop of American culture. She is labeled as an ethnic writer who has reflected black culture and tradition at the center of her writing. Each of her novels highlights the struggle of black people to rediscover and maintain connections to their ancestors. She has raised the political, social and historical issues of contemporary society in her novel.

The Bluest Eye (1970), her first novel established her reputation as a writer. It treats some tragic dimensions of black life such as incest, poverty and subject of black women's search for identity and meaning. Morrison received the National Book Award nomination for *Sula* published in 1973. She ventures into a treatment of female friendship, exploring the dynamic of the relationship between two very different women. *Tar Baby* is her fourth novel about the class contradictions that keep African people divided. *Beloved* which is widely regarded as Morrison's masterpiece won Pulitzer prize for the novel deals with abuses of slavery.

Song of Solomon (1977), her third novel on which this thesis is based on brought on considerable recognition in the form of the fiction and got Award of the National Books Critics Circle. She shifted female vantage point to an African American male perspective. This novel *Song of Solomon* traces the process of self discovery for Macon Dead III, or “Milkman”, as he was called by his friends. He sets out on series of journeys to rediscover a lost treasure in his family’s past. He searches to understand himself in the context of family history and racial politics. Milkman gathered together the details of his ancestry, which he thought had been lost forever. In a larger context Milkman odyssey became a kind of cultural epic for all African –American people. It mapped in symbolic fashion the heritage of people from mythic African past. *Song of Solomon* deals with the torture, pains and suffering that black people should bear during abusive slavery system.

In the past there was slavery system in U.S.A. Black people were sold as commodities. White people judged them as empty minded, uncivilized and treated them as non- human beings .There was exploitation upon black people everywhere. They were deprived of civil rights. Renaming culture was principal source of discrimination and created a number of racial issues among the diverse ethnic groups. Racial discrimination, suppression, crisis of identity were most abusive things for black people’s life. Milkman, the protagonist of this novel, plans a spiritual journey to quest his identity and family root. He reaches to his goal and at last he succeeds to explore his real ancestors through his family history. His achievement about his ancestors as decendents of Solomon is the spiritual attainment. His great grandfather was one of the 21disciples of Jesus Christ who flew from the newly discovered continent and returned to Africa. Through Milkman, the protagonist, Morrison makes the reader aware that African-Americans are the direct

descendants of spiritual force and to recognize them as slave is the misconception, foolishness and ignorance of reality.

Song of Solomon begins with the flight of Robert Smith, the North Carolina Mutual life insurance agent, who teeters at the top of Mercy Hospital in an unnamed Michigan town. Wearing blue silk wings and promising to fly off the hospital roof, he has written a note and sent it around to all the people in the community. He draws a crowd of forty or fifty mostly African-American town residents to watch his flight from the top of Mercy Hospital, known as “No Mercy Hospital” among locals because it does not admit blacks, stands at the end of a street called “Mains Avenue” by the post office but labeled “Not Doctor Street”. As Robert Smith prepares to fly off the roof, Dr Foster’s pregnant daughter, Ruth Foster Dead stands in the crowd below with two half grown daughters, Magdalene Dead and First Corinthians Dead gives birth to the first black child in Mercy Hospital. Milkman Dead becomes first black patient of Mercy Hospital where racism was fully practiced. Macon Dead II, a ruthless slum land lord, obsessed with accumulating wealth, sits in his real states office, called Sonny’s Shop by the tenants, squeezing the last dollars from his customers. He even denies deferring Guitar Bain’s grandmother’s request to rent payment in order for her to be able to feed her young children.

Macon Jr. reads his account book that reflects upon his family’s history. He parted with Pilate when he was seventeen and she was twelve and did not see her again until a year before Milkman’s birth. Macon Jr. bans Pilate from his household because he is ashamed of her unkempt appearance, her former career as a smuggler, her residence in a slum with out electricity, running water and her general disdain for material goods. But walking home at the night of Porter’s attempted suicide, he is driven to stop by her yard.

Macon Jr. listens to Pilate, her daughter Rebecca and her young grand daughter Hagar sings a beautiful melody. Milkman is afflicted with a genetic malady, an emotional disease that has its origins in oppressions endured by past generation and passed on to future ones. Milkman's grand father Macon Dead received his odd name when a drunken union soldier erroneously filled out his documents. Macon was killed while defending his land. His two children: Macon Jr. and Pilate were irreversibly scared by witnessing the murder and become estranged from each other.

At the age of four Milkman discovers that only birds and airplanes can fly. By the time Milkman reaches the age of thirty two, he feels subdued living with his parents and wants to escape to somewhere else. Macon Jr. informs Milkman that Pilate may have millions of dollars in gold wrapped in a green trap suspended from ceiling of her rundown shack. With the help of his best friend Guitar Bains, whom he promised a share of the loot, Milkman robs Pilate. Inside the green trap, Milkman and Guitar find only some rocks and human skeleton that the skeleton is that of Milkman's grandfather, Macon Dead 1st. Guitar is disappointed not to find the gold because he needs the funds to carryout his mission for the Seven Days, a secret society, that avenges injustices committed against African-American, by murdering innocent white.

The organization, composed of seven Black men each of whom is assigned a day of the week, kill white people at random. Every time a black person is murdered but the assailants are left unpunished. The Seven Days try to take revenge by killing, similar to the original violence against the black victims. Thinking that the gold might be in a cave near Macon's old Pennsylvanian farm, Milkman leaves his home town in Michigan and heads south promising Guitar a share of whatever gold he finds. Before he leaves,

Milkman serves his romantic relationship with Hagar, who is driven mad by his rejection. After arriving in Montour country, Milkman discovers that there is no gold to be found. He looks for his long lost family history than for gold. Milkman takes a plane to Pittsburgh, relishing the flight, and then takes a bus to Denville, Pennsylvania, and the town nearest Lincoln's Heaven. In Danville, he finds an old friend of his father's Reverend Cooper, who tells Milkman that he knows his "people" and tells Milkman stories about his father's boyhood, Macon Dead I and Circe. Milkman knows from Cooper that the Butlers, the wealthy white family that employed Circe, were responsible for Macon Dead I's murder. On the way Milkman meets Circe, an old mid wife, who helped deliver Macon Jr. and Pilate. Circe tells Milkman that Macon's original name was Jake and he married an Indian girl Sing.

They came to Pennsylvania in a wagon from a place in Virginia called Charlemagne. Circe adds that the Butlers earned their wealth by robbing and killing poor, independent farmers such as Macon Dead I. She also reveals that a month after his burial, the murdered Macon Dead I body floated out of its grave during the first rain and deposited by hunters in the same cave where Macon Jr. and Pilate stayed. He becomes conscious by his findings.

Milkman buys a cheap car and heads south to Shalimar, his grandfather's ancestral home in Virginia where his car breaks down next to Solomon's General Store. Milkman sees children playing a game and singing a song about Jay, the only son of someone named Solomon. Initially, Milkman finds information about his family history that his grandmother Sing, was an Indian, the daughter of a woman named Heddy. Jake's father his grandfather, was legendary flying African, Solomon, who escaped from slavery

by flying back to Africa. Milkman again hears the local children sing a song about Jay, the only son of Solomon. He memorizes the entire song, according to which Solomon flew home across the sky, leaving a woman named Ryna to cry for him that cotton balls will choke her. The song also relates that Jay was raised by a woman named Heddy in a "red man's house". Milkman realizes that the song is about his great grandfather, Solomon.

He does not know that he is being followed by Guitar, who wants to murder Milkman because he suspects Milkman has cheated him out of his share of the gold. Milkman's findings give him profound joy. He thinks that he has achieved his gold. After surviving an assassination attempt of Guitar, Milkman returns home to Michigan. He rushes to Pilate's home to tell her about his discoveries, unaware of Hagar's recent death. Pilate knocks him out by striking him with a wine bottle on the head. At last he knows that bones which Pilate possesses in her green trap belong to Jake and tells her that she must bury them. Pilate releases Milkman, sending him home with a box of Hagar's hair.

At home, Milkman finds that First Corinthians has moved to a small house with Henry Porter on Southside, Relationship between Macon Jr. and Ruth remains as broken as ever. Milkman accompanies Pilate back to Virginia to bury Jake's bones on Solomon's Leap, the mountain from which Solomon's flight to Africa began and Solomon dropped Jake. They bury the contents of the green trap, in place of gravestone Pilate leaves her snuffbox earring containing her name. Pilate is shot dead by a bullet that Guitar had intended for Milkman. Milkman comforts Pilate as much as he can, singing last lines of Solomon's song to her but replacing the name sugar girl. Finally, Pilate dies. A flock of

birds appears over Milkman's head, two of which circle around him until one of them dives from the sky and retrieve the snuffbox from the grave. The title of this book is very symbolic. Song and singing play overriding role in *Song of Solomon*. In this novel singing is a means of maintaining a link to a forgotten family history. In a community where most of past generations were illiterate, songs rather than history books tell the story of the past. Songs record details of Milkman's heritage and cause Milkman to research his family history. Pilate's songs about Sugarman, for instance, encourage Milkman's quest to Virginia. Similarly, the songs, Milkman hears about Solomon and Ryna, inform him of mysterious fate of his ancestors, and keep him on the path of self – discovery.

Milkman is not the only character who is guided by song .Other members of the Dead family use songs and singing to heal themselves spiritually and emotionally .When Macon Jr. is depressed, he secretly listens to Pilate's songs under her windows. In the same way, after Hagar dies, both Pilate and Reba cope their grief by singing a mighty rendition of a gospel tune .The healing power of song is common theme in African-American culture, where it brings people together and allows people to share experiences.

Since the publication of this novel critics played with this novel and they have evaluated her novel from different perspectives. Her writing can be evaluated from humanitarian, mythical perspectives, sociological, feminist and spiritual perspectives. Morrison's novels have a complex relationship to history. Her life spans the last two thirds of a century which has seen significant changes in civil rights for black people in America and wider public recognition of African-American women writers. All her

novels are in a sense “historical novels” in which characters, as Barbara Hill Rigney has said, “Her characters are both subjects of and subject to history, events in real time that succession of antagonistic movements that includes slavery, reconstruction, depression, and war”. But even though they may appear to be quasi-documentaries that bear historical witness and they posit history as narrative, sometimes deliberately distorted or has remembered as fantasy or even as brutal nightmare.

Morrison has depicted black people’s culture, tradition, myth, sketch on the people, places, languages, values, culture, traditions, and politics that have shaped her own life and that of African-American people. She sees her literature functioning much as did the oral story telling traditions of the past that reminded members of the community of their heritage and defining their roles. Many critics praised Morrison’s complex treatment of issues of African-American identity in her novels. Gurleen Grewal expressed Morrison’s concern with Afro –American identity throughout her oeuvre in stating, “African Americans must negotiate a place for themselves within a dominant culture; how they situate themselves with respect to their own history and culture is a pervasive theme of Morrison’s novels.”

Her works have been praised for the searing accuracy of her portrayals of black life in America. Morrison works are classified as magical realist in the vein of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and black classicist. The 19th century European novelists Flaubert and Fyodor Dostoevsky highly influenced her. African-American oral narratives rather than European traditions provide raw materials for her novels. African-American literary Renaissance influenced her and has cited 19th century Russian novels and other European classics as *Madame Bovary* and the works of

Jane Austen as particular influences on her. Morrison parents and grand parents too. Later it is proved to be imported formative influences upon her imagination. Morrison is not an autobiographical writer in the strict sense of the term. She admitted to Claudia Tate, “my life is eventful; writing has to do with imagination” (127). On the other hand her biography is clearly important as a piece in the jig-saw of her fiction. Morrison’s biography is more contributive source material for literary characters of *Song of Solomon*. Jake (also known as Macon Dead I) has experiences similar to those of Morrison’s beloved grand father, John Solomon Wills, who had lost his land and was forced to become a share croper. Wills became disillusioned by the unfulfilled promises of emancipation proclamation, Abram Lincoln’s (1865) document freeing black slaves. The character Heady may have been modeled after Morrison’s Native Americans great –grand mother. Guitar is a composite character, made up of Morrison’s family and friends whose lives were destroyed by racism. Milkman’s journey to uncover his roots can be compared to Morrison’s own journey. Morrison’s creative life began after age thirty and has been grounded in the Afro –American experiences.

1.2 Review of Literature

Song of Solomon is profoundly rich, multifaceted work that can be premeditated in a number of ways. Morrison asserts that in this novel *Song of Solomon* she has represented the tale of Icarus in reconstructive way. In an interview with Thomas Leclair, Toni Morrison outlines some of her concerns with respect to her literary project in general and her third novel, *Song of Solomon*.

[.....] the myth gets forgotten or they may not have been looked at carefully, let me give you an example: the flying myth in *Song of Solomon*, it means Icarus to

some readers, fine, I want to take credit for that. But my meaning is specific; It is about black people who could fly (Leclair; 317-318)

The flying story of Deadalus presents the father and son soaring in the sky.

Trapped by Minos, Dedalus had an idea of escape to get rid from Minos. He equipped himself and his son with the wings and flew in the sky. At the beginning flight was happy but soon Icarus aspired to fly higher and higher .Wax melted because of the sun heat and he fell down in to the sea, so Dedalus lost his dearest child and cursed his own craft. This story is altered by Morrison in *Song of Solomon*. Here Jake who flies with his father falls but survives. Misconception arises with this fall. Jake's fall can be taken as his individual flight like that of Icarus. But his condition is different from that. In *Song of Solomon* Solomon, flew away and tried to take his son as did Dedalus. He lifted his son up but dropped him near the porch of home where Heady found him. He is unable to soar with his son. Son's "fall" is the result of a situation beyond his control and father's desire for freedom and his family ties are in conflicts. The second aspect is central to Morrison's analysis and reconstruction of the myth. In *Song of Solomon* the hero of the novel Milkman completes the heroic mission left by his predecessors. In "*Song of Solomon: Continuities of Community*", Valerie Smith remarks:

Milkman acquires a sense of identity when he immerses himself in his extended past. He comes full round from individualism his father represents and advocates. Assuming identity is thus a communal gesture in this novel, as indeed, Morrison suggests in her two earlier novels.

Knowing oneself desires from leaving to reach black into history and horizontally in sympathetic relationship to others. Milkman bursts the

bonds of the western individualistic conception of self, accepting in its place richness and complexity of a collective sense of identity (283).

Cynthia A Davis, one of the prominent critics of Morrison's writings, observes *Song of Solomon* as a quest journey. In her essay, "Self, Society and Myth in Toni Morrison fiction", Davis writes "Milkman's life follows the pattern of the classic hero, from miraculous birth through quest journey to final reunion with his double" (20). Milkman's flight to Africa to quest his identity which was in crisis, quests root as well as his freedom from slavery. Flight is associated in the novel with the recurrent pattern of rebirth.

Song of Solomon can also be read with an understanding of trauma and its relationship to feminism, psychoanalysis and race studies. Any one, who looks the epigraph of a novel, gets some ideas in the text. The epigraph to the Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, "fathers may soar and the children may know their name" clarify the actual position of women. Barbara Hill-Rigney describes,

Her characters are both subjects of and subjects to history, events in 'real' time, the succession of antagonistic movements that includes slavery, reconstruction, depression and war[...]for, in her terms, history itself may be no more than a brutal fantasy, a night mare half remember in which fact and symbol become indistinguishable (61).

Hill-Rigney asserts Morrison's traumatized individuals as victims of an already established world which is out of their control. When asked about trauma being passed on through generations Hortense spillers answers:

In some ways I don't believe in the collective unconscious, or racial unconscious, because if that were true then that means that we will all never be anything but haunted, each generation [...]. I do think that there is a body of history that's coded for memory, and that is what's being passed down in some symbolic and discursive and narratological sense, [...] But the body of history is something I would like to think about, the palpable nature of memory and how that gets passed on (28)

Morrison is very skilled at presenting the wounded female body in many of her novels. In *Song of Solomon* also female victims remain trapped in a traumatized state. Thinking of trauma as a product of "The black experience" becomes particularly relevant when discussing the trauma experience by the character Hager in the novel. The basic trauma that Morrison sets up in the novel is trauma of loss, particularly loss of a male, the women love and trust. They are victims of the abandonment of male figure. However, woman who experience greater suffering because of their desertion. All the woman in Morrison's novel experience same type of trauma. In *Song of Solomon* also trauma inflicted upon Ruth and Hager. It is almost as if Hager is a reincarnation of distance female relatives who has fallen victim to same trauma. In an interview with Bonnie Angelo, Morrison discusses a trauma that all too many African American encounter, "Every body remembers the first time they were touch that part of the human race was other .That's a trauma" (qtd. in Matus23). For Morrison, the experience of racism for blacks is a type of trauma.

In her essay "Eruptions of Funk historicizing Toni Morrison" Suasn Willis analyses the black community in *Song of Solomon* based on Marxist terms. In contrast

with Pilate, Macon Dead thus appears as a member of the middle class consumer society. The result of its characteristic materialism is an alienation effect: human emotions are translated in to commodities. As Willis writes “For Macon Dead [.....] All human relations become fetishized by their being made equivalent to money. However, Macon Dead is not so integrated in to the bourgeois class that he cannot sense the impoverishment of his life (Wills 272-273). In Marxist society there is always class conflict, conflict between bourgeois and proletariat. Bourgeois think themselves superior and exploit proletariat. In *Song of Solomon* white people reflect Bourgeois and black people resemble proletariat.

Rubenstein remarks, “*Song of Solomon* is Morrison’s most positive depiction of the values of community” (152). The poetic and gothic elements are pervasively used in Afro-American works. Bell finds, “All four novels continue the poetic and Gothic branches of the Afro-American narrative tradition. The most ambitious and Gothic is *Song of Solomon*” (270). As to the intention of Morrison’s writing Willis says,

There is a sense of urgency in Morrison’s writing produced by the realization that great deals at stake .The novels may focus on individual characters like Milkman and Jadine, but the salvation of individuals isn’t the point. Rather, these individuals, struggling to reclaim or redefine themselves, are portrait as epiphenomenal to community and culture, and it is the strength and continuity of the black cultural heritage as a whole that is at stake and being tested. (315)

Morrison has used magical realism in her literary works. Bradbury remarks the typical characteristic of Morrison work:

Her works could well be identified as a form of magic realism, she draws an oral narratives, African folk tales, remembered ghost stories all part of an urgent sense of powers of myth and desire to recover the hidden fables that might guide black culture.[...] her belief in the power of literary myth and legend and its expression of the paradoxes and ambiguities of human identity[...] *Song of Solomon*, which is likewise full of magical elements takes its black characters Journeying backwards into the myths of their own psychic and racial past. (278-279)

Song of Solomon shares the common theme of overt and subtle racism experienced by main characters in their quests for cultural identity and the “American dream” .This novel depicts border struggles. It is similar to Paredes’s novel *With His Pistol in His Hand A Border Ballad and Its Hero* Garza-Falcon explains that “Paredes’s novel, through its narrative, places before our eyes three prominent issues: the issue of property, labor and education as well as the resulting gender and class relations” (180). In order for an individual to feel significant, it is important to have property and an ethnic community has in some sense ownership, despite the European’s dominance in the financial and societal arena.

There is the border community in Paredes’s novel and the barber shops in Morrison’s novel. Employment opportunities are often restricted to individuals in certain ethnic or social groups. In Morrison’s novel, Milkman, the grandson of a doctor, and from an educated family has the handicap of having too much strength in formal education, which in turn makes him weak in street sense that his contemporaries had been taught by their uneducated parents. According to Susan Vega -Gonzales, “The education Milkman receives from his parents determines his confusion, his lack of identity, and

disconnection from his ancestor” (2). We can conclude that both his *With His Pistol in His Hand A Border Ballad and Its Hero* and *Song of Solomon* represent “border conflict” in the quest for the American Dream as Parede’s characters travel north and Morrison’s character travels South in search of culture identity. The song heard by Milkman Dead in Morrison’s *Song of Solomon* and the balladry explicit in Parede’s is *With a Pistol in His Hand* both serve as unifying devices employed by the authors to illuminate the origin of cultural border conflicts and customs.

CHAPTER TWO

Afro-American Criticism

2.1 Racism Racial discrimination and Racial concern in America

America is a lonely planet because of distinct culture & life style. It is a land of assorted cultures, languages, and literature. After Christopher Columbus invented America in 1492 people from different continents started migrating towards America due to its good climatic condition and possibility of developmental activities. Regarding the origin of its literature, it is unique, essentially modern, recent and international. American literature took birth with orally transmitted myth, legends, tales and lyrics of Indian culture. At the beginning Native Americans were not educated; there was no written literature till European arrived there. Literature of that time was oral form, there was no written literature up to 17th century and the first American writing began with the works of English adventures and colonialists. The first American literature was travel account and religious writing .It was Eurocentric.

People migrated from different continents, brought with them their ideas of history, their language and many things that helped to form the literature. Gradually, different tribal people living there began to explore their own languages, culture and literature. Afro –Americans occupy a large population in America so they started creating their own literary cannon in which they could reflect their long history of slavery, racial discrimination, oppression and other pains and sufferings. They were excluded from main

stream of development as well as marginalized by white people in every sectors. From the position of minority, they struggled a lot to obtain equality socially and culturally. They involved themselves in different types of protests and movements, like The Great Migration from south to north to get freedom, The Civil Rights Movement, The black Art Movement, Black Feminism, Harlem Renaissance, etc in different times. Such protests and movements sow the seed and lay foundation for flourishing Afro-American literature.

White people excluded Afro-American history, culture and literature based on their myth, culture and literature from America. The long term effects of exclusionism created tension between the people of two different races. Afro –American intellectuals felt much humiliated in the prohibition of their history, culture and literature so they struggled a lot for the development of Afro-American history, culture and literature .They involved in different type of protest movements to get equality and integration in American mainstream. Developing consciousness advanced their thoughts then Afro-American writers desire special casement for the judgments of their works, which was very much impractical and Eurocentric. They thought that only a Negro can understand Negro better, only a Negro can reflect clear picture of oppression thus they tried to develop their own way of judging their literature and shorn of white way of analyzing black literature.

Afro-American literature is the sturdy efforts of black critics, novelist, poet and playwright's gradually Afro-American criticism becomes widespread among the black critics. Afro-American criticism includes historical and sociological themes of black American experience. Lois Tyson in her book *Critical Theory Today* states, "The wholesale exclusion of white critical theory is African American criticism" (386). She

also adds, “but post colonial criticism and deconstruction can be adopted for use by African American criticism” (386). The understanding of Afro-American literature requires the understanding of the roots of it. While looking at the root of Afro-Americans one has to look at the oral narratives, folktales, Myth and legends that have provided fertile soil and foundation for the written indigenous literature. It is said that literature is mirror of society so literary piece of any conscious writer represents social problem existing in society. Afro-American literary figures are in same kind of trouble which comes with the rejection of white legacy. They take departure from the tradition established by the whites at the same time they are in trouble of forming their own tradition. This problem of influence is in Bloom’s term “anxiety of influence”(248). These authors always seek novelty so for this they turn to use their own culture, tradition and myth as the main source of their writing. In *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition* Bernard W. Bell explains the narrative origin of Afro-American writer: “To explain the richness of Afro-American novel as a hybrid narrative whose distinctive tradition and vitality are derived basically from the sedimented indigenous roots of black American folklore and literary genres of the western world. (Introduction XII)”

Black writer realized that, only the own literature that could give security to them and the constant threatening of whites could be faced with the rich antique culture arts and literature and beliefs. Living in America Black people werenot the Africans only, they were at the same time influenced by social system of America. Almost all the literary figures who are involved in the issues of blacks have turned toward the rediscovery and revitalization of Myth’s and Legend and ritual as appropriate sign systems for expressing the double consciousness, socialized ambivalence and double

vision of the black experience is America. Major themes of Afro-American literature are racism, racial prejudice and discrimination, exploitation identity crisis etc.

Racism refers to the unequal power relations that grow from the sociopolitical domination of one race by another and that result in systematic discriminatory practices. Racism distinguishes people into different racial group, superior and inferior groups. In order to be in position to segregate, or persecute one has to be in a position of as a member of the politically dominant group, which in America usually means that one has to be white. Superior race group always wants to abuse inferior so that it creates tension, racial conflict among two races people. Racism is generally known as policies on considerations of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining control over that group. Brace defines as “Race has been a cause of more misunderstanding and human suffering than anything else that can be associated with a single word in language”(106)

In America racism has been practiced toward black people. White people feel themselves superior, civilized and treat black people as non human being and as pack horse. White people dominated black in every fields. Their dictum was to dominate black in every field so they espouse different policies to fulfill their aim. In the pretext of educating black people they oppressed them. Such practices are seen in community and in individual level. In the individual level individual whites misbehave individual black. It is related to death, violence to destructions of property which is more destructive, community level, whole whites community act against the black community. Eventually it takes the form of institutionalized racism which refers to the incorporation of racist policies and practices in the institutions by which a society operates. There was racial

domination in every sectors, in education, federal, states, health care and law. One area in which institutionalized racism has been effective in discriminating against African-Americans is the American literary canon. The Western literary canon has been dominated by a Eurocentric definition of universalism which is said to be relevant to the experience of all people. Instead of universalism it only reflects European experience and conform to the style and subject matter of the European literary tradition. Literary canon has been used to maintain white cultural hegemony. Black people are deprived of fundamental as well as civil rights. Condition of black people is pathetic, black babies die because of lack of food and proper medical treatment. Even in hospital also there is racial discrimination. Thousands of black people are deprived of good jobs, education and self respect. They are not allowed to enter even in restaurants. Restaurants have notice board, "Dogs and black aren't allowed to enter." They are the victims of institutional racism as "Both consciously and unconsciously, race is enforced and maintained by legal, cultural, religious, educational, economical, political environmental and military institutions of societies .Racism is more than just a personal attitude; it is the institutionalized form of that attitude" (Qtd .in Feagin 3)

Racism in fact is oppression by one race upon another. James Boggs views that racism and capitalism go side by side. Though, these two terms were not known, they were existing in the society .He says:

This kind of systematic oppression of one race by another was known to mankind in the thousands of years of recorded history before the emergence of capitalism four hundred years ago although racial prejudice was not unknown for example, some Chinese in the third century B.C

considered yellow haired, green eyed people in distant province barbarians . In ancient Egypt, the ruling group, which at different times was red, yellow or black or white, usually regarded as inferior. (uprooting racism 125)

Fake interpretation of Christianity is the main cause to make the whole black race inferior. They behave black as animal. They have feeling that God created black people to serve the white. They ignore talency can be found in the people of black race and regard black people as empty minded and uncivilized. They accept the statement with out consideration that Whites are better than blacks therefore black should be subordinated to whites. They interpreted Negro as inferior by nature because of Noah's curse upon the children of Ham.

Racial discrimination has been practiced in America since 1619, when the first African were brought to America. The Dutch man brought twenty captives in James town and sold them as slaves. Segregation has been working very strongly since 1619 onwards. They were called Negars by white people. Society as well as individual mind of the white race had been acting against the Negroes whose condition was very miserable, pathetic. Afro American's lived in a state of constant mortification. Their dignity as an individual wasn't admitted and they got no respect from the non -white people of the world. Afro-Americans were segregated from school. They werenot allowed to study with white people in same class, were deprived of the public facilities and had to suffer excessive brutality of police. Afro-American's true identity was only on hard labour and cheap wage that they earned. Black people never got opportunities for better jobs have been compelled to do less skilled jobs and most of them have remained unemployed. They

have been living in socially and economically depressed status. Afro-American students had been denied admission to the white school .Even if they were given admission, they werenot given equal treatment Essed asserts that a particularly damaging form of everyday racism consists of constantly underestimating the ability of minority persons, assuming that “typos in their writing are...[due to] language deficiency”(206). School teachers and professors assume often unconsciously that students of colour are in some way inferior: “less intelligent ...lacking ...cultural sophistication ... or social skills” (207).These kinds of unfounded assumptions result in teacher grading unfairly, without holding information about scholarships, ignoring or lacking enthusiasm for the achievements of the black students and neglecting to include black students adequately in class discussion (207). They have to sit at a separate table in library and specific seat in the classroom .Other common examples of everyday racist behavior exhibited by white people include “being patronizing, talking down, assuming lack of confidence, hiring ...or favoring whites ...[and]contact avoidance [keeping a physical distance from a person of colour or avoiding touch]”(205).

White people ignore that all people are created by the god equally and that all have same kind of blood and desires .Although the Negroes have similar mental capacity white people still can’t accept this thing. Even today, many Negroes are living poverty stricken life, uneducated and they are exploited in various ways in society. Racist society judged individual on the basis of the colour of skin rather than worth. Such type of discrimination was practiced in Elizabethan England. The Moors and Jews were the most despised citizens but in America black are despised citizens.

2.2 Racial concerns in British and American writing:

Racial differences are found in Shakespeare's *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice* and Christopher Marlow's *The Jew of Malta*. From the 19th century "race" is regarded as an important part of literary writing. In his essay *Race* Appiah writes:

For literary purposes, the developments that begin at the turn of 19th century have another immediate consequence: race becomes important as the theme of great body of writing in Europe and North America and indeed in the rest of world under the influence of "western" cultures a concept often plays crucial roles in structuring plot. (279)

Institutionalized racism often results in inter-racial and intra-racial racism, which refers to domination within the black community against those with darker skin and more African features and between white and black. Literary figures represent racial issues in their writing. Scottish writer, Sir Walter Scott presents racial theme as the main theme in his book *Ivanhoe* (1819). There was hatred between the Anglo-Saxons and original inhabitants of Britain and Norman rulers. He presents Anglo-Saxons as noble and others as coward. An American writer James Fenimore Cooper wrote *Leather stocking Tales*, which includes five tales: *The Pioneer* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1862), *The Prairie* (1827) *The Path Finder* (1840) and *The Deer Slayer* (1851). In all of his tales racism is reflected as an outstanding theme. Cooper makes the conflict a constant theme throughout the series. He fills his novel with battle scenes between Whites and native red Indians, along with racial conflict the struggle for a new world and miscegenation (The

relation between made of different races in the new world). Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) to some extent carries racial theme. In the ship "Pequod" there are crews with multi racial origins. A Negro boy Pip is dominated by the crew and isolated in the ocean. Melville stresses the importance of friendship in the multi cultural human community. Racial conflict especially between Whites and Indians was common in America until the end of 19th century.

In the narrative of the Frederick Douglass, *An American Slave* (1854), Douglass wrote his own autobiographical account of escape from slavery. Likewise, Harriet Jacob, a slave in North Carolina, wrote "*Incidents in the Life of Slave Girl*" which raised the sense of hatred to sexual exploitation of black slave female. Harriet Wilson's *Slavery's Shadows Fall Even There* (1859) depicted miscegenation. Slave narrative helped black to establish African identity in white America. Similarly Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) also deals with racial theme. It is about love and compassion between Jim, a black slave and Huck a white boy. It is a story of birth, death, rebirth and initiation. During their adventure to various towns and villages along the way Huck comes to know the evil of the world. Huck experiences a big moral problem because he is violating the laws of white dominated society. He determines to break the law, thinking that a slave is also a human being, not a 'thing'.

The Golden period for the development of Afro-American literature was after civil war era. At that time Afro-American literature reached at crest. The struggle of Afro-American for their human and social rights became one of the most important themes. Booker T Washington, an educator and prominent black leader, grew up as a slave in Franklin country Virginia became famous by his autobiography *Up from slavery*

(1901) which deals about his experiences as a slave. James Weldon Johnson explored the complex issue of race in his fiction *Autobiography of an Ex-cloured Man* (1912). The book effectively quest African American identity in America. Charles Waddell Chesnutt wrote collections of stories *The Conjure Woman and The Wife of His Youth*. They reflect racial theme and ethical norms and racial solidarity of the black. William Faulkner exposes the history of the land and many races by creating an entire imaginative landscape Yoknapatawpha. His *Light in August* (1932), dwells about complex and violent relations about miscegenation. It depicts how racism has made white community of the south mad. The main character wandering orphan Joe Christmas, who is mixed black and white blood, belongs to neither black nor white, commits murder in a confusion of racial identity. In *Absalom and Absalom* (1936) he presents story of the downfall of a family. Thomas Sutpen, main character of this novel plans to establish a great family but faces tragic fall through racial prejudice and a failure to love.

Harlem Renaissance was another golden period for the growth of Afro-American literature .During 1920, Harlem, the black community situated up town in New York city sparkled with passion and creativity and became the national center of African American culture. African American Jazz became widely praised. Langston Hughes was one of the prominent poets of Harlem Renaissance of the 1920^s in company of James Weldon Johnson, Claude Mckay and Countee Cullen, W.B Dubois, Ralph Ellison wrote poetry reflecting miserable black community .James Baldwin a native of Harlem wrote accomplished rhymed poetry and popularized African American Jazz rhythms. Literary works of this time reflected lives of black women and Native American .Langston Hughes popularized African American Jazz. His poem, ‘*The Negro Speaks of River*’ glorifies his Afro-

American heritage whereas his another poem “*Harlem*” makes the white community aware for explosion if their dreams were deferred.

Richard Wright wrote *Uncle Tom’s Children* (1938), *Black Boy* (1945), *Native Son* (1940). His novel *Uncle Tom’s Children* deals with violence of the Southern white society against blacks. In his novel *Native Son*, he describes the violence against black. Main character of this novel is bigger Thomas, an uneducated black boy, murders white employer’s daughter and his black girl friend. He insists that social status of blacks is responsible to become violent. His story, “*The Man who lived Underground*” (1945) reflects the theme of identity crisis of African Americans.

The second half of the 20th century marked as Renaissance in multiethnic literature. Ethnic studies started during the 1970s. In the 1980s a number of academic journals, professional organization and literary magazines concerned about ethnic groups. By the 1990s conferences for the study of specific ethnic literature had initiated and the canon of “classics” had been expanded. Important issues included in literary works were race versus ethnicity, ethnocentrism versus polycentrism, monolingualism versus bilingualism, etc. Gary Soto, Alberto Rios and Lorn Deccervantes share minority poetry. They wrote of the departed ancestors and their Mexican roots and describe the multicultural situation of all Americans today. Native Americans have written excellent poetry. Simon Ortriz, an Acoma Pueblo, explores the contradictions of being Native American in the United States. His poetry deals with violence and injustice practiced by Anglo-American and quest for racial harmony.

. Michael Harper writes poem revealing the complex lives of African –American faced with discrimination and violence. His literary work *Clan Meeling :Births and*

Nations: A Blood Song (1971) focuses on racial prejudice in early America. Asian-American poets wrote poetry exploring cultural diversity. Chinese-American, Cathy Song, in her “*Powdering Her Neck*” projects multicultural life. During 1950s James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison reflect the African-American experiences. Their characters suffer from the crisis of identity. Baldwin wrote *Another Country* exploring the racial issues and homosexuality. Likewise, *Nobody Knows my Name* (1961) incorporates a collection of passionate personal essays dealing with racial prejudice. Ralph Ellison in his novel *Invisible Man* (1952) embodies the same concept used in *The Man who Lived Underground*. *Invisible Man* sketches the outline history about the racial concern in literature. Ellison uses an interesting metaphor to show how black are invisible in American society. *Invisible Man* is invisible because people blinded by prejudice cannot see him. It perfectly exemplifies various racial issues like different forms of racism, racial prejudice and discrimination practices, identity crisis and quest for identity. It is a dissent novel that howls rages and hoots against the mainstream culture. The novel depicts an antagonistic relationship between the white and Black. His short story “*King of the Bingo Game*” and collection of essay *Shadow and Act* also deal with racial issues.

2.3 Black Women’s Literature about the Slavery and Female Marginalization:

American women were marginalized in the 19th century. They were denied the vote, barred from professional school, higher education, forbidden to speak in public and to own property. Women raised their voices demanding reforms. They raised their voices against slavery and oppression of women. Lydia Child, influenced by Margaret Fuller, a

leader of this network wrote novel *Hobomok* (1824) shows the need of racial and religious tolerance. She also published the first anti-slavery treatise *An appeal in Favor of that class of Americans called Africans* (1833). Angelina Grimke and Sarah Grimke born into family of slave owners in Charleston, South Carolina, moved to South to North to defend the rights of black and women. They drew parallels between racism and sexism in letters and essays.

Slave narratives became a major movement of 1850s in Afro-American literary history. It was the first written literature of blacks developed as a result of black consciousness. It helped blacks to know about their miserable condition and social segregation. Personal experiences of a slave were articulated along with the agony, anguish, pain and suffering and narrative became a weapon against the white exploitation during the civil war. Harriet Beecher Stowe prominent figure of slave narrative wrote "*Uncle Tom Cabin*" (1853). This book depicted the horror of the slavery, inhuman treatment upon blacks by white majority and demanded emancipation of blacks. It is the root cause of revolution in America. Abram Lincoln greeted Stowe saying, "So you're the little woman who made the Great War" (qtd. in High73). The novel is about an old black slave, Uncle Tom, who desires to get freedom but is unable to get. Slavery is depicted as evil because it brings separation between family members, divides families, and destroys normal parental love.

Zora Neale Hurston, known as one of the illumination of Harlem Renaissance, in her most important work "*Their Eyes are Watching God*" (1937) evokes the lives of Afro-American in rural South.

Women's literature like Minority literature first became aware of itself as a driving force in American life during the late 1960s. It flourished in feminist movement initiated in that era. Literature in the United States and other countries was based on male standard. Women like Any Clampitt, Rita Dove, Jorie Graham, Louise Guluck contributed in the field of poetry. Violence against minority, regional, political and racial discrimination have shaped their work.

Literary figures like Rita Dove, Joric Gharam, Carolyn Kizer, Maxin Kwmin contributed in the field of poetry. Voice against minority, regional, political and racial discriminations have shaped their work. The black women writers played major role in the development of the American literature. Literary figures like Toni Morrison, Zora Neale, Alice Walker express black's reality. They depict a doubly repressed status of women in society. Literary figure of this period produced their writing out their problems and experiences. American Exploitation, humiliation and discrimination was of the subject matters of the time.

Leslie Marmon Silko wrote *Ceremony*, story of Laguna Pueblo culture and defect of white contact. Afro –Americans have resisted racial stereotypes producing many beautiful poems.

Toni Morrison's *Bluest Eye* (1970) depicts the racial hostility of the white characters on black. Similarly *Tar Baby* (1987) *Beloved* (1987) and *Song of Solomon* (1970) on which this thesis is based on also concern with problematic relations between black and white. Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) also concern with racism. To sum up, racial discrimination, miscegenation have become the unrelenting themes of

literature in the United States Of America .Racial discrimination, prejudice and inequality contributed for the enhancement of creative potentialities among black writers.

CHAPTER: THREE

3.1 Racial Domination in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*

The novel opens with the promised flight of an insurance agent Robert Smith who tracked a note on the door of his house just two days before the event was to take place. The inscription goes as the following Morrison writes: "At 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday the 8th of February, 1931, I will take off from Mercy and fly away on my own wings. Please forgive me. I loved you all."(Signed) Robert Smith, INS, Agent. Robert Smith's flight is not a single isolated event with single meaning. But it has great significance in exposing the materials of the black experience. It is a culmination of all the reactions of black people against slavery and suppression. He attempted to fly in the sky for his freedom.

This novel portrays the problematic relation of black and white as well as male and female. The relationship of black and white as the member of two diverse races is formed by the power relation and wide economic gaps. Power relation has effect on the community as a whole. White people supported by all kinds of material domination, not only freezes the black individual, but also classifies all the blacks as a freezing group. All the opportunities and facilities are often restricted to individuals in certain ethnic and

social group. White people taking advantages of their colour and socio-economic status compel the blacks to work for them and treat black people like pack horse. The relationship between them becomes bitter.

Declaration of social equality, freedom and pursuit of happiness to all American citizens could not bring any change in black community. Enjoying the power and upper position in society, white people live luxurious life whereas poverty and social inequality is the rampant condition of blacks. The whites as the members of affluent class are disposed to exploit the blacks on the basis of colour and socio-economic status through which they can take their liberties with them and rule upon them. But in spite of their poor economic status black people deny to accept such inhuman treatment. As a result of this condition of clash between two communities give birth to racial hostility. Economic status and colour of skin which white community take as a measuring rod of social acceptance the blacks get systematically exploited. The social structure has become so complex that members of both communities feel deprived of love and co-operation.

Racial hostility and marginalization emerges not only between the blacks and white as member of two diverse racial communities but it expands even to the people of same race as a chain of oppression. Not only the whites as a member of privileged class dominate blacks, on the other hand, black male also oppress female. There was patriarchal society the epigraph of novel witness the status of women in society. Men have repeated abandonment of women in *Song of Solomon*. The novel's female characters suffer a double burden. Not only are women oppressed by racism, but they must also pay the price for men's freedom.

In *Song of Solomon* Morrison has presented both types of domination among the different characters of the novel. Whites dominate whole atmosphere of the novel. The characters like the Saw mill owner, the white nurse of Mercy hospital, Circle's wealthy white employers, and the Butler's murderer are some examples. Some white animals like white bull, white peacock and Mercy hospital give torture and pain to the black members of society. On the other hand, blacks like Dr. Macon Dead, Guitar, Milkman, Ganitor Freddie are creating tension within black community. In fact, the practice of discrimination and oppression upon the weak members of the community is the root cause of the racial hostility between black and the white in the novel.

3.2 Inter racial Domination in *Song of Solomon*

In this novel black people are living poverty stricken lives. Their life is miserable. The description of Pilate settlement at Darling Street clarifies that Pilate lived in a narrow single-stoery house whose basement seemed to be rising from rather than settling in to the ground. She has no electricity because she is unable to pay for the service, Nor for gas. At night she and her daughter lit the house with candles and kerosene lamps, they warm themselves and cooked with wood and coal (page27).

The use of negative Not Doctor street, No Mercy hospital, Rail road, Tommy's list of things that Afro-American never going to have draw the contrast between the white city, the unnamed Detroit, and the black community within it . Black people became victim of racism everywhere in the society. They are deprived of basic rights like right to freedom, education and right against exploitation. Even in the most holy place hospital where people can get treatment or they can save their life racial domination is also practiced. The name of hospital is " Mercy" but it has never accepted black

patients nor has only black doctor of the town had been granted the privilege to treat his patient there.

On the day of Mr. Smith's flight from the Mercy Hospital it admit first black patient's in the so called No mercy hospital – a typical name which does not allow any black patients in the premise of the hospital . This hospital has frustrated all the blacks patients before. Ruth is the first black patient ever admitted in the hospital. It has historical significant. No black patient ever got admission before this. Morrison, in her narration, is also strongly asserting that the reason behind the admission of the coloured expectant mother inside its wards not in its steps is not the generosity of hospital. Nor is it that woman is the only daughter of the doctor but “It must have been Mr. Smith 's leap from the roof of over their heads that made them admit her” (4-5). This incident also clarifies the pathetic condition of the blacks, how their sanitary rights including others are closed in the book of colour. They are not only subjected by the whites but are deprived of any social services that the country is offerings to its public.

Morrison stresses the different social situation of two racial groups. Significantly, the conflict between the races between predominantly oral and a literate culture, is represented in terms of speaking and spelling. Reading and appear as capabilities exclusively characteristic of racial group in power. White nurse's ordering tone reflects the social hierarchy in a society in which racism, segregation and oppression of blacks are characteristic features. When the nurse addresses the black boy, she spells out for him the letters of the word he is to look for on the hospital door, presuming the boy cannot read. She says look at A-d-m-i-s-i-o-n. The boy however, tries to call her attention to a

spelling mistake she makes: "You left out a s [sic] ma'am". She does not listen Guitar. White nurse's haughty attitude toward Guitar shows that in addition to their individual problems all the characters face racism every day. Black people are deprived of their right to communication community which resides in South side shows many of the characteristic features of oral societies. Town's newspaper refuses to give equal representation to black. Yet black newspaper does not exist. The Janitor Freddie unofficially fulfills the function "Freddie was as much of a town crier as South side had" (Morrison 23). In the black community, news spreads by word of mouth carried by its town crier Freddie "you ain't heard? People say the police is looking for a coloured man what killed the white boy in the school yard" (111). This also depicts the blindness of law towards black people.

Innocent black people aren't only physically, mentally and sexually exploited /suppressed by the white. Sometimes Black people are killed for no reason at all. Though there are laws they are only for black people and not for the white. If white people commit any crime they can walk here and there freely without hesitation. Conversation between Guitar and Milkman at barbershop about murder of young two young Negro boys Emmet Till a black Northerner killed in Mississippi and a white boy killed in their own town. Guitar speaks passionately about the injustices brought upon African-Americans and need to correct them represent this scene. Guitar says "I suppose you know that white people kill black from time to time and most folks shake their heads and say ,Eh ,eh, eh aint that a sham?" (145)

Next scene of exploitation /suppression is in saw mill. White people are factory owners and the blacks are used as laborers in their factories. Life at the saw mill the

pitiable condition of the black labors. They have to work for cheap wages and are fired from the job due to normal mistakes according to the intentions of the owners. The factory owners become richer and richer but the condition of labours is never uplifted though they work whole day . They sometimes lose their life in accident while working in the factory but they never get compensation . In *Song of Solomon*, the sawmill owners offer of sweets and money to Guitar as compensation for Mr Bains death demonstrates that he equates these things with the value of human life. Guitar tells milkman that “since I was little since my father got sliced up in a saw mill and his boss came by and gave us kids some candy.” Guitar sees oppression of black people in every direction.

Renaming is central issue in Morrison’s *Song of Solomon* that clarifies good example how white people play upon the sentiments of the black. We find quite contradictory implications of morality and literacy in connection with white naming. With respect to the misnaming of Jake as Macon Dead, an incident which blurred his past from the view of his descendants, Milkman, whose thoughts are presented, as an interior monologue, comments, "Under the recorded names were other names, just as "Macon Dead," recorded for all time in some dusty file, hiding from view that real names of people, places and things. Name that had meaning (329). Here writing appears as the instrument of a powerful literate white society which obstructs and suppresses the orality and the black community built on it.

The culture of renaming black in the white community is one of the central cause of marginalization and common phenomena in the United States. It has become a source of racial discrimination and created racial hostility among the diverse ethnic

groups . The renaming system becomes a matter of great concern to Milkman and it disappoints him to a greater extent. The trend of renaming becomes much more painful as a tool of slavery and the black people consider it as one of the basic strategies of their victimization. The Black have strong dissatisfaction .Milkman says "white people name negroes like race horses"(243). Milkman seems to be more concerned with his 'slave name ' - Macon Dead third than his slave "status ".

He considers himself a victim of the renaming culture when he thinks deeply about his own white preferred name as Milkman, because the white people ignore his baptized name Macon Dead third and rename him as their favorite name Milkman. It is the trend where the black people like Milkman feel their auspicious name being ignored and nickname much recognized of black elsewhere as a puppet among the white. It becomes a part of the bitter experience of Milkman and touches his heart deeply. But on the other side, it opens his eyes towards his ancestral family and it helps him to explore his forefather. Milkman knows that it is not only his individual case, but a great problem of whole black community. In this context, he knows through Pilate that his great grandfather, whose name was Jake was dismissed from his ancestral name and had given a new name Macon and Dead was added as a stamp of slave determining about his poor social status . Macon Dead, the illiterate slave or father of the Dead, acquired his name by accident .A senior army officer named Yankee who registered him in the Freedman's Bureau was drunk and mixed the line of the name with the line of the place of birth (Macon) and respectively the line of the surname with entry asking about the person's father (Dead). Pilate draws far reaching conclusions from this incident, which was typical of the social

handicaps blacks owing to their illiteracy, had to suffer long after their emancipation: "Everything bad that ever happened to him because he couldn't read. Got his name messed up cause he couldn't read." (53)

Although the title Dead is added against the name of Jake's decedents only Milkman remains concerned. He questions himself why the employer of his sister, Magdalena renamed her Lena, his aunt, Rebecca as Reba. Reflecting his resentment towards the white people in authority who gave the title Dead, Milkman says to Guitar, "I'm a dead! My mother's a Dead! My sisters. You and him ain't the only ones!" (38). But Guitar remains unconcerned, unaware and indifferent about it. When Milkman does not find any reaction of Guitar against the renaming system and observes him being satisfied with whatever is being done, it depresses him. He realizes that black people are themselves responsible for their domination.

Milkman wants to be clear about their ancestral name and decides to explore the reality by asking his aunt. He says, "I will ask Pilate. Pilate knows. It's in that dub ass box hanging for her hear. Her own name and everybody else's. I'm gonna asking her what my name is. Say, you know how my old man's daddy got his name?" (89). His consciousness reflects the anxiety of the whole black community and he intends to make his efforts to explore its root and cure it permanently, tries to find some proper solution to uplift the people of such victimized community.

Milkman says "Look. It's the condition our condition is in. Everybody wants the life of black man. Everybody. White men want us dead or quiet which is the same thing as dead white women same thing" (222). Whites do not want to see progress of blacks. They always want to dominate and exploit the black as much as possible. If they find some

black figures skilled, conscious and prosper, they simply clear them from the path. If they find illiterate black people prosper they own their property playing different tricks. In *Song of Solomon* Circe, white employers murder, Macon dead and take his property and land. Macon says how white people looted his father. "Papa couldn't read, couldn't even sign his name. Had a mark he used. They tricked him. He signed something. I don't know what, and they told him they owned his property" (53).

White people cannot tolerate black's progress. White, were creating lots of trouble in the lives of the blacks. The blacks are themselves in under privileged state. White obstruct every step of their progress. Whenever they step of their progress whenever they try to climb the social ladder they are pulled from the back. Milkman says "You try to climb Mount Everest, they'll tie up your ropes. Tell them you want to go to the bottom of sea just for look they'll hide your oxygen tank. Or you don't even have to go far" (222). Morrison stresses the different social situation of the two racial groups significantly. The conflict between the races, between a predominantly oral and literate culture is presented in terms of speaking and spelling. The nurse's ordering tone reflects the social hierarchy in a society in which racism, segregation and oppression of blacks are characteristic features. When the white nurse addresses the black boy, she spells out for him the letters of the word he is to look for on the hospital door, presuming the boy cannot read well. The boy tries to call her attention to a spelling mistake she makes. "You left out a s, ma'am" (7).

Cynthia A. Davis *Self, Society and Myth in Toni Morrison's Fiction*: "The look of white society, supported by all kinds of material dominations, not only freezes the black

individual but also classifies all blacks as alike, freezing the group. They became a “we object before the gaze of a Third” (Davis 10).

Morrison uses different symbols throughout the novel: symbols are objects, characters, figures and colors used to represent ideas or concepts. Whiteness, artificial rose, egg and gold are main symbols used in this novel. Although white is considered as symbol of purity, almost all of the characters in *Song of Solomon* are black. The few white characters represent violence and wrong doing. After Guitar’s father is cut in half during sawmill accident, for example the mill’s white foreman offers the family almost no sympathy. Circe’s wealthy white employers, the Butlers, are murderers. When they take Macon dead 1st land they end his innocence. The white creatures are symbols of imminent harm or wrongdoing. White peacock seen by Guitar and Milkman, like the white bull that caused the labor and subsequent death of Freddie’s mother, is a phantom of evil. The two men’s pursuit of the white peacock symbolizes their greed. The peacock itself symbolizes the corrupting allure of wealth. Just as when Macon Jr. saw the gold on the cave as a spread tail and became obsessed with accumulating wealth. This greed is evil because it makes Macon a tyrant and eventually turns Guitar against Milkman.

According to Krumholz the egg is a symbol of Milkman’s ritual rebirth, being present in vital moments: the flight with Saul is presaged when “a black rooster strutted by, its blood –red comb darped forward like a wicked brow” (268). The rooster and peacock represent male pride, vanity and greed due to their inability to fly. When Milkman and Guitar plan to steal Pilate’s gold, they see a peacock. Contrasting with the

cock, eggs signify engendered potential, being also related to females since they contain and nurture the egg (559).

Pilate is associated with this symbol because Milkman remembers her as “an old black lady who had cooked him first perfect egg, who had shown him the sky” (211). Morrison uses magical realism to show the racial problems of mid-twentieth century America in physical terms for example the ghostly white bull that terrifies Freddie’s mother and whose appearance seems to speed Freddie’s birth is a striking symbol of over - whelming white power and oppression .

3.3 Female marginality in *Song of Solomon*

In the novel *song of Solomon*, domination persists not only between the people of different races but it is found even in the people of same races. There is special ways of domination in the novel. Although black people are themselves dominated by the white, and they have first hand bitter experience of domination, they also dominate female characters of the novel who are doubly oppressed. Not only are women oppressed by racism, but they must also pay the price for men’s freedom. Because of patriarchal society female characters suffer more in this novel. The epigraph to Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*, shows the real status of the women in that society. “The fathers may soar and children may know their names” (1). The obvious omission with in this statement is the women. While much of the theoretical discourse in the novel deals with Milkman’s quest for identity, harm and ancestry few focus on the trauma and grief suffered by the female characters. Although the quest is not theirs, most of the females are unable to live authentically or reach a sense of self definition without being valued by

a male. Traumatized by being removed from a male embrace many of the women fall in to a state of self destruction. For instance, In *Song of Solomon* the female characters Pilate, Hagar, Ruth, Ryna are victimized by patriarchal system. Hagar it is almost as if she is a reincarnation of a distant female relative who has fallen victim to the same trauma. Being abandoned by man she loves also traumatized Ryna, her great grandmother. Being abandoned becomes some thing that many of the women encounter and their lives become colored by the pain of that event. Trauma then can be discussed as a type of inheritance. Although it is unwanted, it is never the less bestowed.

Milkman, Freddie, Solomon and Macon Dead II traumatizes them. Position of women is doubly difficult. Black women in Morrison fictions discover that they are neither white nor male and that all freedom and triumph (are) forbidden to them (44). Womanhood like blackness is Other in this society, and the dilemma of woman in patriarchal society is parallel to that of blacks in a racist one. In *Sula* the adolescent Sula and Nel, parading before young males who label them 'pig meat' are "thrilled" by the association of voyeurism with sexuality. They are not just women in a society that reduces women to such cold and infantile images that Corinthians Dead can think that she didn't know any grown up women. Every woman she knew was as doll baby (Song 197).

They are doubly defined as failures and outsiders. They are natural scapegoats for those seeking symbols of displaced emotions. In recurring scene of black male resentment at black women's submission to oppression.

Ruth Foster Dead is unarguably one of the most physically and mentally wounded women in the novel. By the age of sixteen she is married to Macon Dead and by the time she is twenty he has stopped touching. His refusal of her is brought on by the events

surrounding of her father's death. When Dr. Foster is on the deathbed Macon makes a startling discovery. When he enters the room he recounts "In bed. That's where she was when I opened the door. Lying next to him. Naked as a yard dog, kissing him. Him dead and white and puffy and skinny, and she had his fingers in her mouth" (73). The cold fingers penetrating Ruth's mouth are symbolic of the possible sexual relationship Macon believes them to have had. Uncertain as to whether Dr. Foster had an incestuous relationship with his wife, he tells Milkman, "Nothing to do but kill a woman like that. I swear, many's the day I regret she talked me out of killing her"(74). However, Ruth and Macon both have dissimilar account of what actually took place on that day. Macon kept each member of his family awkward with fear. His hatred of his wife glittered and sparked in every word he spoke to her. The disappointment he felt in his daughters sifted down on them like ash (dulling their butterfly complexions and choking the lilt out of what should have been girlish voices (10). Macon does admit to his son that he never really loved Ruth, saying, "I can't tell you I was in love with her People didn't require that as much as they so now" (70). And given the lack of affection for her, there was no emotional connection to stop him from truly deposing Ruth because of her relationship with Dr foster.

Every time he suspected illicit relationship of Ruth with her father while telling the story to Milkman he utters, "No both times he was there. She had her legs wide open and he was there. I know he was a doctor and doctors not supposed to be bothered by things like that but he was a man before he was a doctor" (71). He goes on to explain to his son that he felt like that Ruth and her father were against him .Ruth declares. "I was twenty years old when your father stopped sleeping in the bed with me" (125). Interestingly it is

not the absence of their sexual relationship that Ruth begins with, it is with his refusal to touch her. By not even attempting to lay a hand on her, Macon treats Ruth as if she is untouchable, a diseased person, who could contaminate him if he came into contact with her by the age of thirty, having touch and sexual pleasure removed from the marriage for a decade now Ruth acknowledges her fear that she would “die that way” (125). Here Morrison sets up lack of intimacy as a type of traumatizing rejection inflicted upon female body.

Macon does everything he can think of to abort the baby and Macon attempted to kill him while Ruth was still pregnant. Ruth fights for Milkman’s survival, but not her own. Ruth spills out with to Milkman about her dominated position “.....the fact that I am a small woman,” she utters. “I don’t mean little, I mean small, mean small, and I am small because I was pressed small” (124). In the confines of her father’s house and in comparison to him she is made inconsequential. The people in their community recognize her as “Dr Froster’s daughter”. She is not her own person. Her existence is directly related to her father. Ruth’s repetition of the word “Small” as a self –descriptor points to her low Self –esteem and living in the same house under the reign of Macon .On the other hand portrays the incestuous relation ship between cousins Hagar and Milkman upon their first meeting Pilate introduces Milkman to Hagar as her brother. Reba, Pilate’s daughter, corrects her saying. “That ain’t her brother, Mama. The conscious, Pilate responds “Same thing”. Hagar joins in the conversation asserting that there is a difference between the two. Pilate, then corrects by asserting, “I mean what’s the difference in the way you act toward’ em? Don’t you have to act the same way to both?” (44) to show the next picture of female domination.

In this scene Morrison set up this early on that family where no mother cares how they are connected. Milkman and Hagar quickly fall in love. From the time he first saw her, when he was twelve and she was seventeen he was deeply in love with her, alternatively awkward and witty in her presence (02). At last Milkman enjoys sexual relationship with Hagar. After Milkman realizes that he no longer wants Hagar he describes her as the “third beer, Not the first one, which the throat receives with almost tearful gratitude, nor the second, that confirms and extends the pleasure of the first but the third, the one you drink because, it is there, because it can’t hurt and because what difference does it make?”(91)

This scene shows how male perceive female as commodities. Never considering Hagar a girlfriend or future wife because of her lower social class. Milkman instead searches for a bride among the wealthy black women of Honore, but finds them too boring for his taste. At the age of thirty one he writes a letter to Hagar breaking off their relationship. Hagar is driven insane by the letter and rushes out to find Milkman. Hagar became insane and died because of Milkman’s resentment. Next important factor of female marginality is naming ritual of Dead family where sons got their names according to father’s name and if they give birth to female they got their name randomly chosen from the Bible.

In *Song of Solomon* female characters are sexually exploited. Male perceive them as a means of re-creations. They enjoy sexual relation with them and even after giving birth to their baby they refuse to marry them. Pilate and Reba are sexually exploited characters. Pilate tells her story with truth. She says that she settled down on a Virginia island for a few years and found a good man who fathered Reba but he refused to marry

her after Reba give birth to Hagar .Even women are forced to work as prostitute. Solomon escaped slavery and left his wife, Ryna, to suffer alone in cotton fields. So does Milkman flee the confine of his dull existence in Michigan and leave Hagar to die of unrequited love. The scenes that describe women's abandonment show that in the novel men bear responsibility for themselves, not for their families and their communities. For instance, after suffering from slavery, Solomon flew home to Africa without warning anyone of his departure. But his wife Ryna, who was also a slave, was forced to remain in Virginia to raise her twenty one children alone. After Guitar's father is killed in a factory accident, Guitar's grandmother has to raise him and his siblings. She supports her grand children financially, intellectually and emotionally. The society in the novel judges men and women differently. While men who fly away from the communities and families are venerated as heroes, women who do so the same are judged as irresponsible. Although Solomon abandoned his family with his flight to Africa, generations later he is remembered as the brave patriarch of the whole community.

At the same time, Ryna, who was left to care for a brood of children, is remembered as a woman who went mad because she was too weak to uphold her end of the bargain. Residents of Shalimar have named a Scary, dark gulch tree after Ryana, while they have given Solomon's name to a scenic mountain peak. The community rewards Solomon's abandonment of his children but punishes Ryna's inability to take care of them alone (823). Everyday, Macon Jr. sits in his real estate office, called Sonny's shop by the tenants, squeezing the last dollars from his customer's. When Guitar Bain's grandmother requested him to defer her rent payment in order for her to be able to feed her young grandchildren, she says "I don't know that, Mr. Dead sir, but babies can't

make it with nothing to put in their stomach but”. He doesnot listen to the plight of the black and refuses without hesitations.

In this novel black people are living lower standard and poverty stricken life. Their life is miserable. Description of Pilate settlement at Darling Street clarifies that Pilate lived in a narrow single-storey house whose basement seemed to be rising from rather than settling in to the ground. She had no electricity because she is unable to pay for the service .Nor for gas. At night she and her daughter lit the house with candles and kerosene lamps, they warmed themselves and cooked with wood and coal (27).

In another instance Macon Jr. finds out that one of his tenants, Henry Porter, has gotten drunk and is threatening to shoot himself. He says, “I’m’ aiming to get my money down he can go on and die up there if he wants to. But if he don’t loss me my rent, I’m going to blow him out of that window instead of attempting to save porters life”. He visits him to collect rent .This scene depicts selfishness and black’s lust for money.

Milkman’s grandfather, Dr Foster’s attitude towards black people is other good example of intra racial domination. Macon says, “Your mother’s father never liked me I have to say I was very disappointed in him. He was just about the biggest Negro in this city. Not the richest, but the most respected. But a bigger hypocrite never lived Negro in town worshipped him. He didn’t give about them, though. Called them cannibals” (71).

3.4 Efforts to get rid of White exploitation and consequence:

Black people become fade up because of white exploitation in every direction so they willing to get rid of their oppression take revenge on society against white through different ways in this novel. Black people form the organization to take revenge on seven

days of seven black men each of whom is assigned a day of the week to kill white people at random. Every time that black person is murdered and the assailants are left unpunished. The seven days revenge killing is similar to the original violence against black victim. These revenge killings are performed on the same day of the week as original murders of the black victims. They want to keep the ratio the same; they make the plan to kill white people. Black people name place Main Avenue, not Doctor Street to build their identity and challenge white authority. Charles Scruggs says:

The renaming of Mains Avenue as Not Doctor street can be inscribed in this attempt to build one's own identity while apparently accepting to be located in the void by the white authorities playing with serious issue for black the act of renaming, the black community tries to give meaning to a hostile world, shaping space in to a particular place, making their own space intimate, fighting against urban anonymity colourless names whites have given their streets. (70)

3.5 Search for identity in *Song of Solomon*

As an Afro-American author, Morrison turned to her own cultural heritage, myth, legend, folktales, beliefs and religion to find the best mode of literary expression. Afro-American writer felt a strong urge to mark out the root that could give true identity. So, for this purpose, Morrison searched the best stuff in the treasury of black culture. Her overarching thematic concern throughout her work is with issues of Afro-American female identity in the contemporary world. The main issue of this novel is issue of racism in relations between black and white America. Her primary interest lies with experiences

of African-American women whose quests for individual identity are integrally intertwined with their community and their cultural history.

Song of Solomon explores issues of African-American history and myth in the formation of individual identity. *Song of Solomon* centers on the character of Milkman Dead, who is born in the North but journeys to the South where he discovers that he is descendant of Solomon, a member of mythical tribe whose members can fly. The novel begins with the flight of Robert Smith, the North Carolina mutual life agent in a unnamed city town, who stands on top of Mercy hospital dressed in powder blue suit getting ready to jump off and fly across Lake Superior. On that day Ruth Foster Dead, the first black doctor's daughter in town gives birth to a black child in Mercy hospital named Milkman Dead and becomes the first black patient of Mercy hospital where racism was fully practiced. The cold, selfish and materialistic hero in the first part of the book makes a trip to south in search of gold. But while returning from south he doesnot bring any gold but the knowledge of the past and identity for his community. Milkman, in the end, succeeds to unveil all the knots of mystery and leads his society towards emancipation through the roots of self and identity. The root of self and identity are affirmed by the revival of the past. The cultural identity of the Dead family remains submerged in the history of past until Milkman brings it into light. He makes clear lineage of his family and gains the power to fly.

It is completely a social novel which depicts social condition of Negroes that was very miserable, problematic, and painful since the introduction of slavery system in America. Black people lived in a state of humiliation and never got respect from white even from nonwhite people in the world. They were deprived of fundamental rights,

public facilities and had to suffer brutality everywhere. They never get opportunity to get skilled jobs due to racial discrimination against them. On the other hand Negro male also dominate female in *Song of Solomon*, Morrison makes critique on a patriarchal society, which devalues women. While some would characterize the text as a novel about the loss of fathers that is rather about the effect the loss has on the psyche of women left behind. Certainly, men in the novel experience the trauma of parental loss, but they have inherited a coping ability that women havenot. The much masculinized idea of the quest works to ultimately traumatize the women who are left on ground. In this novel men have inherited the ability to fly. men loses and in return they leave. The women however, remain stationary. They remain tied to the land and to their children. They are left to pass on stories, sing the songs and mourn the men who have left them. In the end Hagar is left dead, and Ruth is shattered.

To sum up, the protagonist as well as the other characters of *Song of Solomon* experience sense of disgust and deep ingrained animosity among the people of the same race as well as different races. In real sense all the characters of this novel are victim of both types of racial hostility. It is the main obstacle to secure them individual and social position in community. The recovering of the past in rural south implies a process of dismantling imposed cultural constructs and of reconstructing of different world view from the obscured remains.

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